

# UNITED WAY CAMPAIGN TIPS

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## Basics

- Campaign is short and sweet – couple weeks, not much longer
- A committee of about 10 people plans, organizes and administers the campaign each year for about 2,200 employees (setting the goal, timeline and creating events and activities)
- The company is broken down into manageable departments/groups
- Each department/group has 1-3 people who coordinate that group's pledge cards and help to make sure everything gets turned in and completed
- Everyone in company benefits from some company activities, yet each department/group has the flexibility to run their own 'campaign' that is tailored to their employees
- Retirees are included in the solicitation (solicited via a letter from their local president). The president of the local retiree group serves on the campaign committee.

## Campaign theme

- The county campaign always has a theme or message. Consider using this theme for your internal campaign – or creating one of your own that might go along with the county theme. Sometimes it works well to have a company theme for the campaign – events, activities and communications can be focused around this theme to create a consistent message and “feel.”
- One year we used “unforgettable” as a theme and recruited employees with good singing voices to sing the song “unforgettable” at different United Way events and activities.
- Also, we use a “Pop Up Screen” - when employees turn on their computers, a screen ‘pops up’ with a United Way message (including the theme) for about 15 seconds before the computer goes to its normal status. This message pops up every time the computer is turned on for one week during the campaign.

## Kickoff meetings

Every department/group has a “kickoff meeting” to start the campaign

- food/treats always a plus
- do a skit (to deliver United Way messages)
- hold raffles
- give door prizes
- have employees give testimonials
- have the boss give remarks
- invite United Way speakers
- show a video
- pass out the pledge cards
- give prizes for those who turn in the pledge cards before they leave the meeting

## Pledge cards

- Everyone handles this differently. Some employees prefer not to be personally solicited; others would enjoy having someone hand them their card and express appreciation for any contribution that is made. Tailor your pledge card delivery to what works best for your co-workers.
- Many newer (often younger) employees have not been exposed to United Way campaigns before. They may not even know what to do if someone leaves a pledge card on their chair, their desk or in their mailbox. Make sure this group of employees knows and understands the importance and value of giving to United Way.
- If confidentiality is an issue, provide employees with a pre-addressed envelope so they can fill out the card and return it in the envelope so no one sees it except for those who need to.
- Consider “Early Bird Drawings” – hold a drawing (with the pledge cards turned in so far) and provide a gift certificate (\$10-\$25) for one employee who turned in his/her pledge card within the first week of the campaign. Do this the first two weeks of a three week campaign.
- The main reason people don’t contribute is because they are not asked. Asking matters.

## Sharing Results

- It's important to share the final results of the campaign with employees and recognize their role in the success of your campaign. Place a sign or banner in a heavily traveled area, say 'thanks' via e-mail, put a note in with the weekly paychecks, post a note on bulletin boards, etc.
- Some departments put out quick little "newsletters" to keep their groups informed of their progress, to tell neat stories and announce cool stuff being done. Running a campaign can be a great team-building experience.

## Thank You

- Recognition is important. So is saying "THANK YOU" – often. Personally thank donors. Send a short hand-written thank you if your list is not too long. The more personalized the correspondence, the better it will be received. Also remember the way in which a letter or note is distributed can be as important as its contents – try to deliver it personally if you can.
- Consider rewarding employees for participation in the campaign with fun prizes from your company. Lunch with the boss (paid for by the boss!), park in the President's parking spot for a day, free pass to skip a meeting, personal delivery of your mail for a week, free coffee for a week, free company pencil/coffee mug, etc.
- Consider having a "thank you" event – nothing big or fancy. Just an event to celebrate the end of a successful campaign.

## FUNDRAISING IDEAS

- Silent Auction – employees, retirees, friends and family members donate handcrafted items, entertainment or sporting event tickets, culinary delights (dinner for 6), gift certificates, electronics and services (monthly car wash for a year), etc.
  - Solicit vendors for items since the proceeds benefit the United Way, not your company
  - Encourage company executives to offer items (i.e. dinner with the President at a popular restaurant, a round of golf at the country club with the CEO, etc)
  - Include logo items from your company if you can
  - If your company has tickets to events and activities, try to get those in the auction
- Raffles – tailored to employee preferences (don't forget to include incentives for ticket sellers)
  - Prime parking spaces
  - Travel (Vegas, Chicago, travel vouchers)
  - Golf packages
  - Gift certificates (Cabela's, jewelry, spa)
  - Vacation day
- Blue Jean Fridays – employees pay \$x to wear blue jeans on Fridays – for a designated period of time (3 months, 6 months, all year)
- Ice Cream Socials – have ice cream treats for the employees at the end of a workday (consider having the bosses serve the treats)

- Pancake breakfast – have the bosses serve up a pancake breakfast for the employees to start their workday
- Special lunches – themed lunches to bring visibility and a few extra dollars to United Way (Mexican Fiesta, backyard barbecue, “Under the Sea” seafood feast, etc). Have executives dress to fit the theme and serve the lunch.
- Duck Dash – a “ducky derby” type event where employees pay \$x to sponsor a yellow duck. The ducks are dumped into the Grand River and the ones that crossed the finish line first won prizes.
- Dunk Tank – employees pay \$x to toss balls at the target to dunk ‘popular’ employees (company executives work best for this one). A UofM vs. MSU competition works well for this activity if you have a passionate Wolverine and Spartan available.
- Human Sundae – employees paid \$x to be a “Friend of Glenn” and pay for the opportunity to put ice cream and sundae toppings on their boss’ head. The executive sat on a chair in the middle of a kiddie wading pool while employees covered him with ice cream, sauces, whipped cream, and cherries.
- Chocolate Day – have employees bring in their favorite chocolate treats and sell them (similar to a bake sale).

- Mini-Golf – have employees pay \$x to go to Sharp Park or the Golf Dome for a round of golf and lunch (it can be done in an hour!).
  - Have contests at the course for putting and chipping
  - Include the cost of a hot dog, chips and pop with the golf
  - Have someone take pictures of the teams and treat it like a real golf outing
- MSU vs. UofM Day – have employees show their spirit by donating canned goods or \$\$ to either MSU or UofM, with all proceeds benefiting the United Way and its member agencies.
- Mini Garage Sales - employees donate old books, videos and they are sold to co-workers for contributions
- Baby Picture or Pet Picture Match Game - \$x per vote to match the baby or pet with the employee. Winning entry receives prize.
- Scavenger Hunt – \$x entry fee to compete and find items from the neighborhood during the lunch hour (inside the building and out). Give a prize.
- Pocket Change – put out a jar and watch the change grow to demonstrate how quickly just a little bit of help can support the United Way.
- Competition – foster friendly competition between departments or groups within your company to encourage support for the campaign – coin jars, video game tournaments, poker/euchre tournaments, eating contests, etc.

There are lots of other great ideas for having a fun and engaging campaign. Give Beth Shafer or Marc Daly a call at the United Way, 784-0511, for further help and information. Have a great campaign!